BOROUGH OF NELSON.

NELSON,
20TH JANUARY, 1899.

To the

Chairman & Members of the Health Committee.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting you my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary condition of the Borough. I shall, as in former years, first give you the formal record of the births and deaths which occurred during the year. I find 884 births were registered (460 males, 424 females) which gives an annual birth-rate of 27·6 per 1000 of the population. The deaths registered (including premature births and inquest cases, numbered 396 (206 males, 190 females), which gives an annual death-rate of 12·3 per 1000. If we exclude the premature births (41) and inquest cases (21) we get a death-rate of 10·4 per 1000.

The deaths of children under one year, including premature births, totalled 132, giving a death-rate of 14·9 per cent. calculated on the number born during the year; excluding premature births, 10·3 per cent.; last year the percentage was 17·3.

The following table epitomises the ages at which the deaths occurred :—

Deaths under 1 year	132	184 deaths under 5.
,, of 1 year and under 5 years...	52	
,, of 5 ,, 15 ,, ...	23	212 over 5 years.
,, of 15 ,, 25 ,, ...	23	
,, of 25 ,, 65 ,, ...	111	
,, of 65 and over	55	

I enclose a detailed list of the causes of death and the ages at which they died.

Under the "Notification of Infectious Diseases Act" there have been reported 85 cases of Scarlet Fever, 26 Enteric Fever, 1 Puerperal Fever, 1 Continued Fever, and 29 Diphtheria. In these cases the Health Superintendent took the necessary steps to prevent their spread, notifying the parents and also the School authorities—thus prohibiting children from infected houses attending school—supplying disinfectants, attending to the drains, ashpits, &c. In all Enteric cases supplying special buckets with disinfectants for the reception of the excreta, which were regularly removed and taken to the Refuse Destructor; infected houses fumigated by sulphur di-oxide. Thorough disinfection of clothing and bedding after infectious cases is impossible as we have no proper apparatus. This I mentioned in my annual reports of 1896 and 1897. These recommendations, I believe, would have been put in force in connection with the proposed Infectious Hospital had not the Local Authority been met with difficulties in their negotiations for the acquisition of the requisite site, the details relating to which, I understand, have been fully communicated to the Local Government Board.

This has been an exceptionally healthy year: in fact, we have been practically free from epidemics, excepting during the month of September, when a considerable outcry was raised owing to a number of cases of Diphtheria being reported in a few days. In my last quarterly report I mentioned the steps taken to prevent any serious spread, issuing handbills and posters, advising householders to have their milk boiled before using it. I also mentioned the fact that although 24 cases were reported we had not a death. I said in that report we were almost free, and it is satisfactory to state that in the months of November and December only one case was reported. As good water and pure air are necessary factors in preserving the health of any district, I may say

we had an abundant supply of *water* all the year, and the Water Manager had a very satisfactory report from the County Analyst of its purity. The parks afford ample opportunities for enjoying the fresh air. The Victoria is practically completed, the Walverden fenced in, a portion partitioned off for recreation purposes, and plans are before the Sub-Committee for laying out the remainder in walks and flower beds.

Although we have an unprecedented number of unoccupied houses, a considerable amount of building has been going on. Mr. Ball (Borough Surveyor) has informed me that plans have been approved for 377 houses, 17 workshops, 15 stables, 3 schools, 1 hotel, 1 brewery; and 50 for alterations; also that 3 estates have been laid out for building purposes. The work now in progress at Bradley, when completed, I have no doubt will be one of the greatest improvements ever effected in Nelson. Private street improvement works have been executed in 25 streets, at a cost of about £16.000, and there is still a great deal to be done – Railway Street, Vernon Street, Carleton Street, Princess Street, and others are in a pitiable condition. The principal Main intercepting Sewers have been executed, and storm overflows provided at convenient places, passing the flood water direct into the river.

The Filter Beds at the Sewage Works are being extended (as the existing beds were not large enough to purify the whole of the sewage), and when completed are expected to make a great reduction in the amount of Chemicals used, and thus lessen the cost.

The Sanitary Department has been busy during the year, and through the kindness of Mr. Priestley (Health Superintendent) I am able to give you in a brief space some idea of the work done :—Nuisances : 268 complaints have been received and investigated and steps taken for their abatement. In many cases an abatement has been secured by an intimation to the person responsible, but 87 Statutory notices have been served on instructions from the Health Committee.

118 Ashpits to be covered.
34 Privies to convert into W.C.'s.
27 Doors to Ashpits.
20 Defective Drains.
9 Covering Manure Middens.
9 Waste Water Pipes to be disconnected.
10 New Ashpits to be provided.
4 Water Closets Blocked.
2 Smoke Nuisances.
8 Miscellaneous.
9 Repairs to Slaughterhouses.

250

There has been no seizure of unsound meat during the year, but 368 haddock, 8 quarts of shrimps, and 19 rabbits have been condemned as unfit for food, and destroyed.

Legal proceedings have been instituted in six cases; one person for carrying on an offensive trade was fined 40s. and costs; one for breach of bye-laws in connection with above, fined 20s. including costs: One for insanitary manure midden withdrawn on compliance with notice and payment of costs; two for defective drains withdrawn on same terms; one for defective drains fined 10s. and costs.

One new slaughterhouse has been licensed in place of an old one. Altogether there are 20 private slaughterhouses in the Borough, a number of which are badly adapted for the purpose.

The Common Lodging House has been very satisfactorily conducted during the year.

No noxious or offensive trade has been established. Dairies and cowsheds have been fairly satisfactory. Scavenging has been satisfactorily carried out by the Corporation staff. Ashes deposited at the tip, market refuse, and butchers offal treated at the refuse destructor, which has been continuously going.

A Local Government Board enquiry has been held, and sanction obtained to borrow £7000 for the erection of a new Refuse Destructor, which is much needed.

Two cases of smoke nuisance have been noticed, but no standard limit for the emission of black smoke has yet been adopted. The temporary Small Pox Hospital has had a whole year's holiday.

I have the honour to remain,

Yours obediently,

A. P. MILLAR, M.D.

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NELSON CORPORATION,

1898.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

A. P. MILLAR, M.D.,
NELSON.